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ABSTRACT

The paper describes how social studies classroom teachers can use the cultural models approach to help high school students understand multicultural societies. The multicultural models approach is based on identification of values which are common to all cultures and on the interchangeability and transferability of these values (universal constants) from one culture to another. Twelve universal constants have been identified: survival of small cultures throughout history, integration versus separatism, immigrant dilemmas, cultural heroes, national and cultural symbols, senior citizens, home, hospitality, marriage, death, modern versus traditional values, and political dissent. Examples for the cultural models approach are taken from the cultural, social, and political experiences of Estonians in America. The developers believe that because the model focuses on universal values it is useful for helping students understand the values and experiences of other cultural groups as well. Students are directed to examine the 12 universal constant features within a base group (in this case Estonian Americans) and then compare them with the same features in another cultural group. For each of these 12 universal constants information is presented on background, pertinent considerations, and activities including research reports, role playing, analyzing primary source material, creating folk stories, and preparing ethnic foods. (DB)

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"Using The CULTURAL MODELS Approach In Studying The Multicultural Experience"

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
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Konstantin Pats, Kristjan Palusalu, Kalevipoeg, Tasuja! George Washington, Mohammed Ali, Paul Bunyan, Davy Crockett!

What do the members of the first group have in common with the second? Impossible to tell? Not to tenth grade American History students at Lyman Memorial High School in Lebanon, Connecticut or at a number of other schools nationwide which have recently been adopting the "Cultural Models" program into their studies of our multicultural society.

The "Using Estonian/American Based Cultural Models For Multicultural Studies In The Secondary Schools" project is a United States Office of Education, Ethnic Heritage Studies Branch grant program that is committed to the multicultural studies concept. So, what is new or different about it?

The program hinges on the Cultural Models concept -

1.) because there is a need for an effective teaching tool to pull together the diverse and rich array of materials that already exist in multicultural education at the secondary level.

2.) because the Cultural Models approach gives promise of helping to make this wide-ranging, difficult to grasp topic more manageable for student and teacher alike.

SP 012 524

In almost any high school in the country one can find literally stacks of materials dealing with "ethnic studies" or "minority issues" or with the accomplishments of certain cultural groups in our society. Yet, how

can this wide range of materials, much of it very good, be utilized in the classroom ? It's too diverse. Too specialized. In the State of Connecticut, for example, no fewer than sixty-six separate ethnic groups have been identified. Distinct, living, ethnic groups ! No fewer than thirty-eight percent of the population is foreign-born or first generation ! How then can any cultural group be studied in depth and with understanding ? How can the in-depth study of certain groups be justified, if many or most of the others are excluded ? The answer is - they can be - depending on the individual choice of the particular cultural group for study that is made by a student in a classroom, after the options have been made available to him. It is entirely possible for thirty different cultural groups to be studied simultaneously by thirty different students in a classroom - and studied meaningfully ! The Cultural Models concept has shown this kind of promise in its first tests. How does the program work ?

The two key words to describe the program and process are interchangeability and transferability. It's really quite simple. It's the same logic that Henry Ford used in building cars. Develop interchangeable parts ! The same logic holds true with the Cultural Models. Starting with a basic set of twelve universal values (There is nothing magical about the number.) called "Cultural Models : The Multicultural Connection", this interchangeability and transferability is attained. Here's how :

Interchangeabilty. By using the concepts developed in the Cultural Models approach - four of these are illustrated here - the essence and values of any cultural group can be highlighted and studied against those of the base group, be that group Polish, Irish, Black American, Native American, or any other group.

(Insert - Model # 2)

Transferability. Any and all cultural groups can be plugged into the program at will. This feature makes the concept particularly attractive for courses in Global Studies, International Relations, and Multicultural Studies. The Models deal with universal values such as how a culture views and treats life, death, love, marriage, and its heroes. Teacher and student begin with the study of the values and experiences of the base group. These values might be labeled the "universal constants" - and development of an almost endless number of analogies and classroom activities from these are quite easily managed. These, then, might be labeled the "variables." Many of these activities are built into the twelve Models which form the core of this program. The varieties of activities that are possible are many indeed. After some experience and confidence in the application and utilization of the Cultural Models concept has been developed in the classroom, working on and developing other types of base Models may in itself be an interesting and challenging undertaking, for student and teacher alike.

A set of lesson plans and student activities in the Curriculum Guidebook which has been produced by the program is based around the Models used in conjunction with the expository materials, audiovisual programs, activities developed around ethnic music, and more.

For the purposes of this initial Cultural Models program, the base group that was chosen was the Estonian/American. Some reasons for this were :

1.) because the Estonian/American group is relatively small, making in depth analysis rather easy.

2.) because Estonian/Americans have a "low visibility" and recognition level, making them an ideal group to analyze ; preconceptions and/or biases regarding this group are largely missing.

3.) because the Estonian/Americans are a recent immigrant group - half foreign born, half American born ; they are an ideal group to study in terms of the acculturation process ; they are ethnically a "living case study."

4.) because the Estonian group, in America and elsewhere, is in the process of developing a definite "global consciousness" and "global orientation" which may be significant as a harbinger of a more universal global orientation to come with all peoples.

5.) because the Estonian/Americans possess a readily identifiable set of values which makes for useful carryover and comparisons with other cultural groups in American society. Or, as Professor James Banks would say - they are a coherent and viable subcultural group within American society.

The point cannot be overemphasized here, however, that practically any cultural group could be used as the base study group; the others would meanwhile serve as potential models (variables) until picked up by a student for intensive study. This is indeed a requirement of the unit of study as set up in the curriculum guidebook. After the base group - in this particular case, the Estonian - has been thoroughly examined utilizing the Models concept as a cornerstone, and, after students feel quite comfortable in the approach, they are required to pick another cultural group of their own choice for individual (or small group) study. This having occurred, it is interesting to watch as the books and other materials in the classroom and school library dealing with all types of cultural groups that may have gone unnoticed before now drawing new attention. The beauty of it is - books, slide shows (especially older, silent filmstrips), and magazines that have been lying around unused

for years now become centers of student interest. This low-cost, budgetary consideration - in terms of needed materials - is not the least appealing feature of this project when it comes to program support by administrators and boards of education.

Following is a representative sample of some of the Models. You will note that the basic manner in which each is set up is the same. Students need this security blanket ! The emphasis and the range of student activities varies widely however. One, to insure that the main bases of "universal values" are covered and understood; and, two, to accommodate differing student needs and interest levels.

(Insert - Models #8, #9, #11)

The complete set of Cultural Models in the program (by title) is as follows :

#1 : "Small Cultures In History : Death Or Survival ?"

#2 : "America's Ethnic Groups : Melting Pot Or Foundation For The Nation ?"

#3 : "The Immigrant's Dilemma : This Way Or That ?"

#4 : "Heroes, Supermen, And Good Guys : Who Are They ?"

#5 : "National And Cultural Symbols : Who And What Are They ?"

#6.: "Senior Citizens : The Throw-Away Generation ??

#7 : "Home, Sweet Home - A Place Or A Frame Of Mind ?"

#8 : "Guess Who's Coming To Dinner ?"

#9 : "The (Wedding) Bells Are Ringing - For Me And My Gal ?"

#10: "Death - The End Of Life Or A Part Of It ?"

#11 :"Modern Life - A Question Of Divided Loyalties ?"

#12 : "Voices Of The Dissidents - Cries In The Wilderness Or Forerunners Of A New Freedom ?"

Other programs that might be interested in utilizing these and other pilot materials that have been developed should contact the program directly. These materials are still available in limited quantities for pilot study purposes.

* Biographical Note :

Mr. Enn O. Koiva is Project Director of the U.S. Office of Education "Cultural Models" grant program and a practising teacher of the multi-cultural experience at Lyman Memorial High School in Lebanon, Connecticut and at the part-time Estonian School in Manchester, Connecticut. These schools were among the first to fully implement the Cultural Models concept into their curriculum.

The Multi-Cultural Connection

MODEL #1 : "SMALL CULTURES IN HISTORY : DEATH OR SURVIVAL?"

FIGURE 1

FIGURE 2

BACKGROUND: Cultures, especially small cultures, have always faced periodic dangers of physical extinction. So too with the Estonians and others.

CONSIDER: 1. the outside pressures that have threatened Estonian culture - Fig. 2. Briefly discuss the seriousness of each threat ranging on a scale of 1 to 10.

2. the outside pressures that have threatened smaller cultures or groups in American history - such as in Fig. 1. List at least four specific cultures or groups in American history and the source of the outside pressures.

TO DO: Pick a group from America's multi-cultural society past or present and develop a "Death or Survival" model around it. You may, if you wish, follow the pattern in the two models that are given. Consider pressures of <u>all</u> types, not just physical ones. Outcome?

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MODEL # 2 "AMERICA'S ETHNIC GROUPS : MELTING POT OR FOUNDATION FOR THE NATION?"

BACKGROUND:

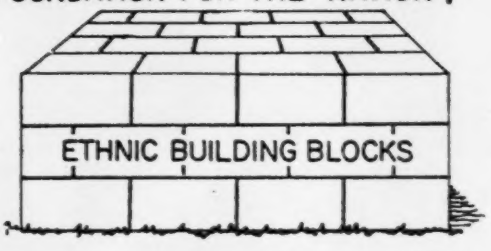
The issue has long been debated - is the American Nation better off as the Melting Pot where cultural differences, customs and values are down-played or wiped out

or

as a Nation that recognizes the differences in our people, and values and appreciates them as being important and contributing to society.

MELTING POT?

FOUNDATION FOR THE NATION?



CONSIDER:

1. Has the Melting Pot worked in America? If not, could it work? Specific examples?
2. Which groups have been "most meltable"? Why? "Least meltable"? Why?
3. Discuss the Estonian-Americans in terms of "meltability".

TO DO:

Pretend you are a state legislator who represents a city that has a large population of people who are recent refugees from the hypothetical coutry of Baltica. They wish to start their own school where the Baltican language and culture will be taught to their children. This school would be in place of regular public school. The Balticans are asking for your support; the local newspapers are waiting for a news release from you. You give your public statement:

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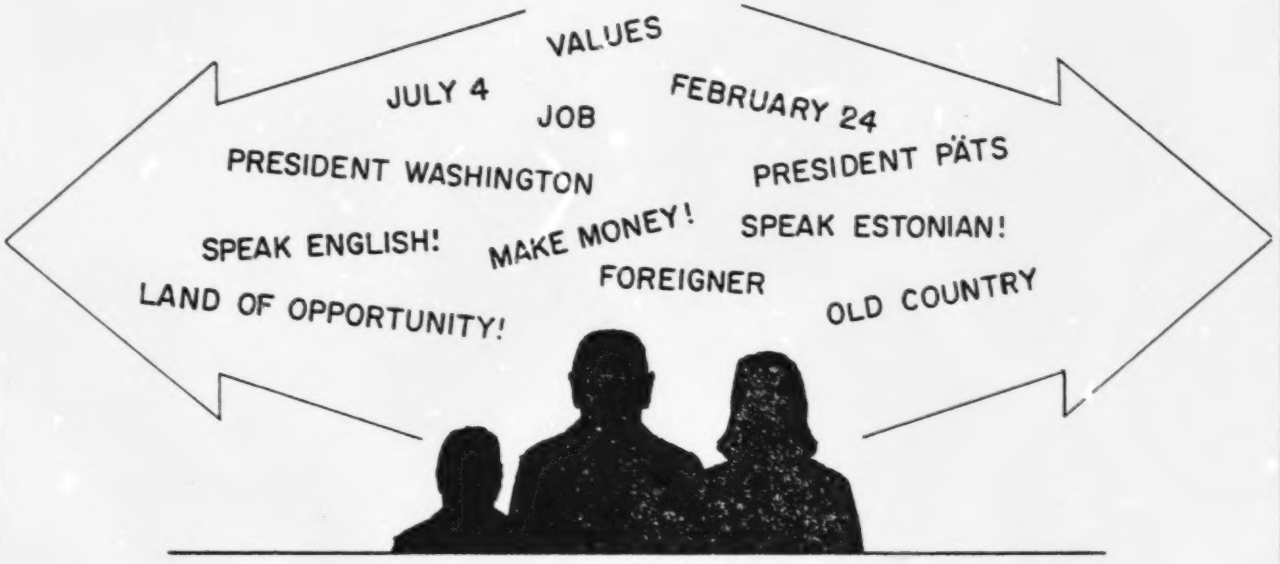
MODEL # 3 "THE IMMIGRANT'S DILEMMA: THIS WAY OR THAT?"



BACKGROUND: The immigrant's dilemma - which way to go? This has been and is being faced by millions of people in America. To follow the culture of the ancestors or to drop it and try to go "American"?

CONSIDER:
1. Itemize and rate in importance the factors that might help determine an Estonian-American's decision in this regard.
2. Factors that would be important with non-Estonians.

TO DO: Prepare a chart listing several ethnic groups with which you are familiar. Under each, itemize things that you associate, can see, can touch or hear - i.e. that is distinctly "ethnic" about people of that background based on your personal experiences. Develop some thoughtful conclusions about the "immigrant's dilemma".

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MODEL #4 "HEROES, SUPERMEN, AND GOOD GUYS: WHO ARE THEY?"

BACKGROUND: Whatever the group, whatever the time and place - each culture has its own pantheon (or set) of heroes, pleasing personalities - the good guys or girls who appeal to the group members and their value system.

ESTONIAN PANTHEON	AMERICAN PANTHEON	OTHER (SPECIFY)

CONSIDER: which figures - past or present, real or imagined - would you place in the Estonian pantheon? In the American pantheon? Comparisons?

TO DO: Complete the pantheon for any culture or group that could be found within America. Be specific!

Give good reason for your choices!
Rate the choices in terms of importance!

The Multi-Cultural Connection

MODEL # 5 "NATIONAL AND CULTURAL SYMBOLS : WHO AND WHAT ARE THEY?"

BACKGROUND:

Each country and culture has symbols that tie its people together. The symbols must be clear and easily recognizable by all. Thus, the television ad which says, "Baseball, hot dogs, apple pie, and Chevrolet" - and we recognize the country instantly as - America.

CONSIDER:

Read the shortened version of Eduard Bornhõhe's "Tasuja" - "The Avenger" in the curriculum guidebook. Record all the references you can that could be considered as national symbols by Estonian people.

TO DO:

Rewrite Bornhõhe's story using a setting from American history. Title it - "The Avenger : American Style." Change whatever detail you must; however, keep your basic story realistic and believable.

Which recognizable American symbols will you include? Which symbols are universal?

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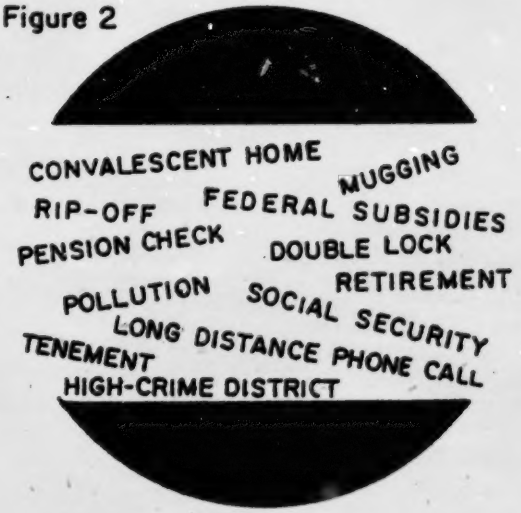
MODEL # 6 "SENIOR CITIZENS: THE THROW-AWAY GENERATION?"

BACKGROUND: In Figure 1 are terms which appeared in the Estonian poem "Vanaema" - "Grandmother" by Anna Haava. Figure 2 brings out terms which have recently appeared in our newspaper stories and ads concerning our senior citizens.

Figure 1

Figure 2



CONSIDER: What huge cultural gap is indicated by Figures 1 and 2? Why has the issue of aging and the aged come more to the forefront of attention in recent years in our country?

TO DO: In most older societies - including the Estonian - the problem of the aged and their care was handled by the family. It was the moral obligation of the younger members to see the older members through, including taking them into their homes. It used to be that way in America, too. What largely changed it?

Pretend that you are a noted sociologist who has been studying the problems of the aged in America. You have been charged with presenting a scholarly paper proposing solutions to the problem to a group of experts on the subject. You proceed:

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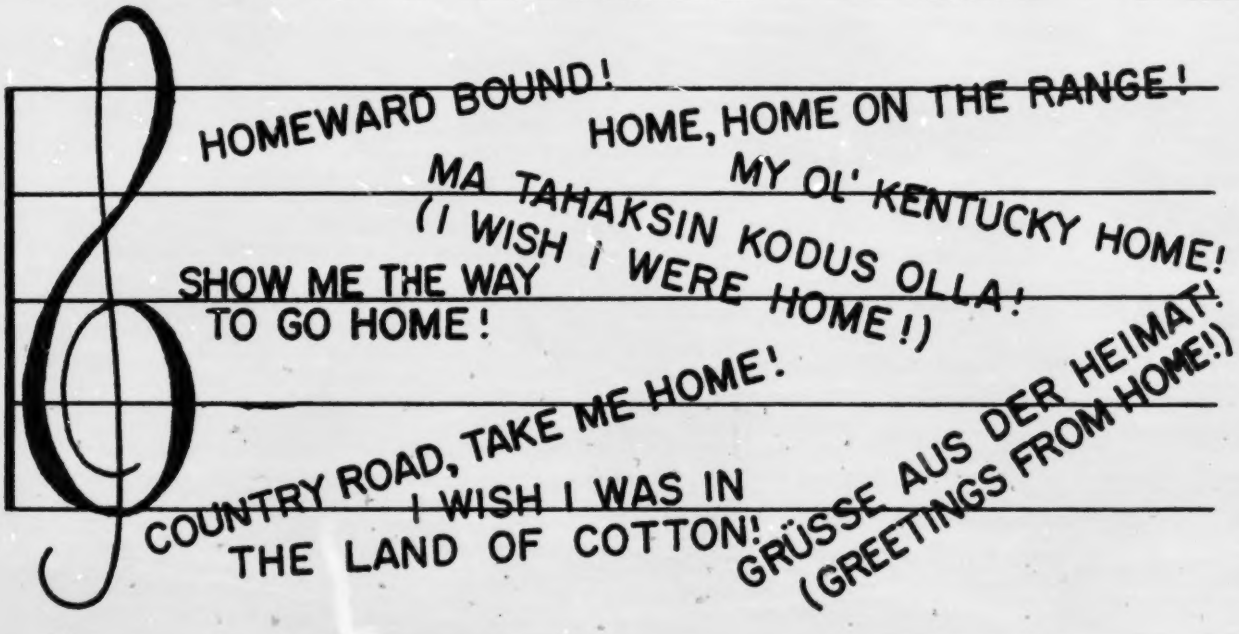
MODEL # 7 "HOME, SWEET HOME - A PLACE OR A FRAME OF MIND?"

BACKGROUND: The folksongs of all cultures use the idea of "home" as a central theme. It seems to have an universal appeal. It gives a sense of unity and commonality to the group members.


HOMEWARD BOUND!
HOME, HOME ON THE RANGE!
MY OL' KENTUCKY HOME!
MA TAHAKSIN KODUS OLLA!
(I WISH I WERE HOME!)
SHOW ME THE WAY
TO GO HOME!
COUNTRY ROAD, TAKE ME HOME!
I WISH I WAS IN
THE LAND OF COTTON!
GRÜSSE AUS DER HEIMAT!
(GREETINGS FROM HOME!)

CONSIDER: What is your definition of "home" - a house? a town? a country? an idea? other? How many "home" be interpreted in the lyrics of the song "Ma tahaksin kodus olla" - "I Wish I Were Home" in the album Best Loved Estonian Songs? Why would this word be a very complex one for Estonians and Estonian-Americans to define?

TO DO: Listen again to the folk songs in the album Best Loved Estonian Songs or take a familiar American folk song or that of some other ethnic group in our society.

Try writing your own lyrics to the melody. Use the idea of "home" as the major theme in your song. Try presenting it or perhaps taping it.

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MODEL # 8 "GUESS WHO'S COMING TO DINNER?"

BACKGROUND: Certain foods have always been stereo-typed with certain cultures: pizza - Italian, taco - Mexican, and so on. Often you can tell interesting things about a group through its diet.

THE SMÖRGASBÖRD

ÖF THE WÖRLD

CONSIDER: the possibility that you are having your future in-laws over for dinner. You are eager to make a good impression and consider yourself a pretty good cook. You know that your future in-laws are Estonians! You plan your dinner:

TO DO: Prepare two different ethnic foods - one that is distinctly Estonian (that's for your in-laws) and one that is _____ (your own ethnic heritage) because your parents decided to come to dinner also.

The Multi-Cultural Connection

MODEL # 9 "THE (WEDDING) BELLS ARE RINGING - FOR ME AND MY GAL?"

BACKGROUND: The wedding customs of a culture usually tell a great deal about the value system of that culture - the role of family, role of women, religion, and so forth.

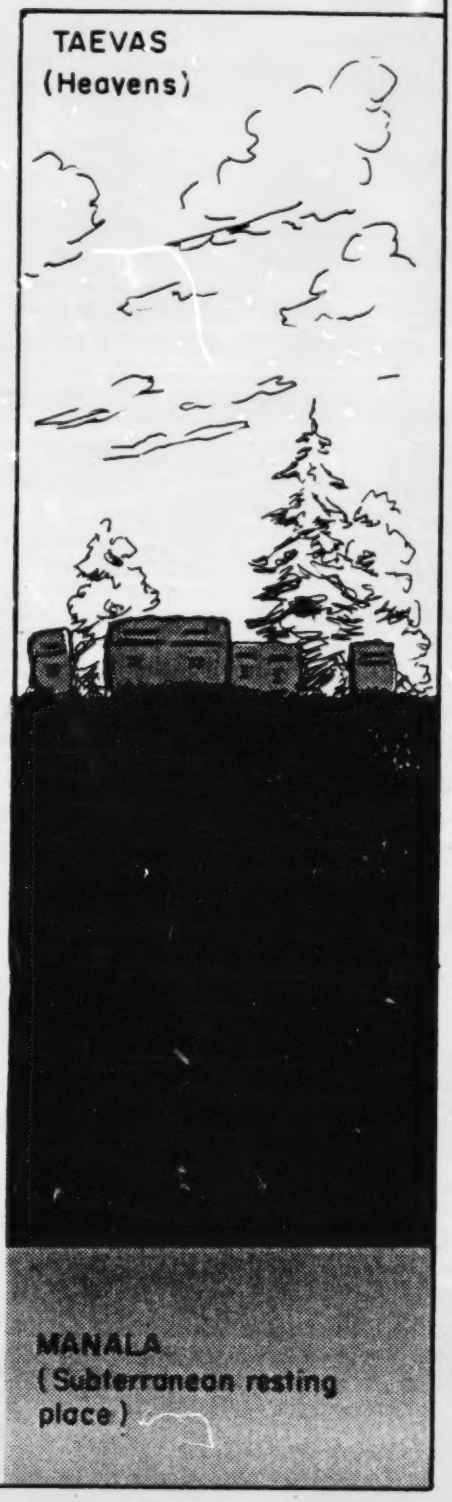
THE UNIVERSAL LANGUAGE OF LOVE

CONSIDER: that you were a guest at a traditional Estonian wedding and, some time later, attended a "typical" American wedding. Compare the two styles. Would you have difficulty in coping? With which would you feel more at ease? Why? How would each reflect the values of its culture?

TO DO: You are the social columnist for the hometown newspaper and are to cover a big local wedding which is to be held in the grand - _____ (chose an ethnic group!) style. You attend the wedding and write the article.

The Multi-Cultural Connection

MODEL # 10 "DEATH - THE END OF LIFE OR A PART OF IT?"



BACKGROUND:

Death has preoccupied mankind all through history. Some people have tried to cheat it; others hurried it along; some looked for fountains of youth. It has been an important part of just about every religion and culture.

CONSIDER:

1. Historically, how did the Estonians explain and view death? Compare with attitudes in other cultures.
2. What should be our legal definition of death - particularly in view of the recent cases involving life support systems, the Karen Quinlan case and so forth?

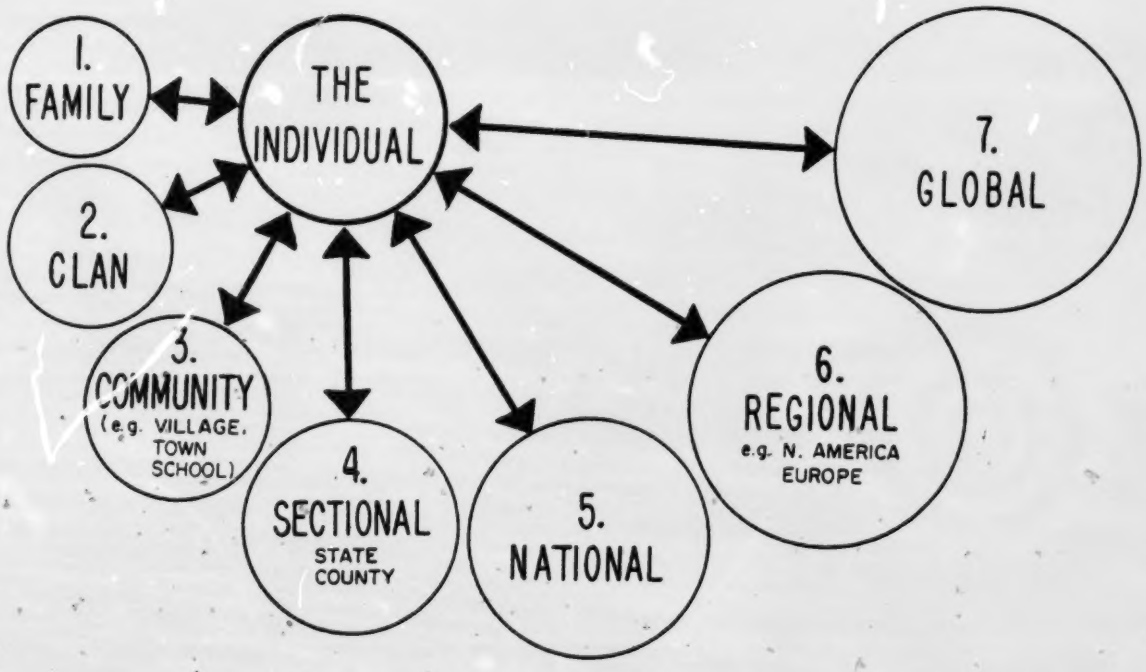
TO DO:

You are a nationally syndicated gossip writer for the column "Beloved Annebelle". Recently you received a letter from a teenage girl who asked for advice because she was depressed over the death of a friend in an auto accident. You print your reply:

The Multi-Cultural Connection

MODEL # 11 "MODERN LIFE - A QUESTION OF DIVIDED LOYALTIES?"

BACKGROUND; Much of history can be written in terms of mankind's various types of loyalties at various times - whether to kings, tribes, clans, religions, nations or some other causes. It's important to consider because it tells a great deal about people's values and way of thinking at the time.



CONSIDER: the Estonian Culture-Loyalty Model discussed in Topic Seven of this guidebook. Read the accompanying description; then draw a similar American Loyalty Model using whatever categories you think would be appropriate. Compare the two models. Similarities? Differences?

TO DO: Construct a Loyalty Opinion Poll and duplicate it. Run it with a certain class or classes in your school. Include all the important types of loyalties you can think of. Leave a fill-in for write-in possibilities. Carefully tabulate the results. What conclusions can you come to regarding teenage Americans' loyalty choices in your school?

The Multi-Cultural Connection

MODEL # 12 "VOICES OF THE DISSIDENTS - CRIES IN THE WILDERNESS OR FORERUNNERS OF A NEW FREEDOM?"

BACKGROUND:

One of the great international movements of our time has been the cry for basic human rights everywhere. President Jimmy Carter was one of the leading Americans to voice his concern. On the world scene the issue of human rights has come to be especially associated with the so-called "dissidents" - people who live in Communist nations, yet who have dared to openly call for a restoration of basic human dignity in their long-suppressed societies. Some of these people have been killed, sent to jail or driven to exile, - names the world has come to recognize such as Solzhenitsyn, Ginzburg, Orlov, Amalrik, Shcharanski and others.

Following is part of a speech made by an Estonian dissident to a group of scientists and government leaders in Soviet-controlled Estonia. The speech was secretly smuggled out of the country. It was made about that time in the summer of 1978 when the notorious dissident trials were going on in Russia - and the world watched with horror as people such as Shcharanski, Ginzburg and others were being sent away to long prison terms in Soviet jails. For his own safety we shall refer to the dissident here by common Estonian name of Kasemets.

(Kasemets' Speech)

WE ARE SURROUNDED BY A RIGID RUBBER WALL.

... We are a small nation and are painfully aware of how little is known of us... We are separated from the world, not a part of it. We have even become accustomed to this artificial separation yet it is anything but a normal situation. In reality, we are a part of the world even we ourselves cannot perceive it as such. And the world's troubles are also our troubles even when we perceive them to be too big and instead busy ourselves with local problems. By our usage, the word "global" and "humanistic" have come to have a negative connotation.

...What prevents us from being involved in the spiritual life and the great universal ideas and concerns? Spiritually, we demand too little; we are self-satisfied; we lack interest for the great universal concerns.

We live in isolation, cut off from information. The blame for that goes to our (government) bureaucracy in all its complexity and stupidity.

Between our thinking people and the great big world out there is a multi-tiered, anonymous, and stupidly rigid rubber wall. It prevents the flow of information within the borders of Estonia and the Soviet Union and between us and the outside world.

Scholarly works are not permitted or often are long delayed! Maybe censorship could improve, as some claim, the condition of society, but it could under no condition improve the quality of literature and free information.

The "Times", "Guardian", "LaMonde", "Neue Zurcher Zeitung" - the great newspapers of the world - none of them are available in Tallinn. One can find not a single book that was printed in the western world in our bookstores!

...Trips to the outside world by our scholars are rare... Passports are pulled at the last moment...Notices of scientific conferences are never posted...Letters from the outside not received...We ourselves are partly to blame for this...For too long, we have allowed a narrow-minded, stupid government bureaucracy to plan and guide our intellectual life...People and their ideas are condemned through anonymous sources... Unknown superiors govern people's fates...

The situation is not much better with outsiders coming to visit us. Only one-half of one per cent of Soviet Estonia - the area around Tallinn - is accessible to them. Everything else is off-limits, even the cultural center of Tartu...Outside Estonians whose ideas are incomprehensible or seem vaguely threatening to some bureaucrat here are not allowed to visit this country.

...Yet we have much to give the world, more than just an Olympic regatta. We have achievements and capable people... yet they are stifled and crushed by our bureaucracy...Two Estonian poetic anthologies have appeared in the outside world - in Italy and Finland. Our people have yet to receive any copies of them...

Our system of mail censorship is like a theatre of absurdity; yet its effects are vicious. I have not been allowed to receive a single magazine from the United States where my articles have appeared.

...The creative energies and real interests of our people are diverted by sham ceremonies and the silly hustling-bustling in preparation for the meaningless Olympics coming up...Why do I say things that our society does not allow us to say? ...Because for too long we have smugly played a very bad game ...I believe great changes are in the wind in the future of our country...Take courage...If we continue to bow down and to take but crumbs from the tables of our leaders, then the future leaders - who are about to come face-to-face with very serious problems in our society - won't have to take us seriously either, and can dismiss us as simply people who have sold out their spiritual freedom and basic human rights and responsibilities for the sake of some material comforts and petty privileges.

Consider:

1) What does Kasemets mean by the reference to a "rigid rubber wall" around Estonia?
2) Who does Kasemets blame for Estonia's present troubles? Why doesn't he seem to attack the Soviet government directly?
3) Kasemets is also critical of his own people living around him. Cite several of the specific criticisms.
4) Why does he condemn the 1980 Olympics, part of which are held in Tallinn?

To Do:

Imagine that you are a foreign affairs advisor to the President of the United States. Reports have been continuously coming out of the Soviet Union of violations of basic human rights there. Leaders of many ethnic groups in the United States have been demanding a "strong" American response to these violations - which, it has been pointed out, are in opposition to the Charter of the United Nations and the Helsinki Agreement of 1975 - both of which were signed by the Soviet Union.

You are charged with drawing up a specific plan or policy for the American government to follow in relation to the human rights issues, especially as they relate to the Soviet Union. Your advice to the President...